

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on May 19, 2004, **SHAWN S. JOHNSON**, age 24, of O'Fallon, Illinois, and **ARMIN J. DEPPER**, age 34, of Collinsville, Illinois, were charged in separate indictments by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in East St. Louis, Illinois. **JOHNSON** was charged with unlawful possession of cocaine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 844(a), and unlawful possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(1). The cocaine violation carries a maximum penalty of imprisonment of 3 years and the firearm violation carries a maximum penalty of 10 years.

DEPPER was charged with unlawful manufacturing of marihuana, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(1). The marihuana charge carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and the firearm charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment.

An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

The case against **JOHNSON** was investigated by the Scott Air Force Base military police, the St. Clair County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The case against **DEPPER** was investigated by the Metropolitan Enforcement Group of Southern Illinois and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Both cases are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Joel V. Merkel. These investigations were conducted as part of the St. Clair and Madison Counties Project Safe Neighborhoods DRAGUN Teams Initiative, a cooperative effort of local, state and federal law enforcement, and state and federal prosecuting authorities, aimed at ridding communities of drugs and guns.